



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
1707 Main Street, Suite 435  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: (608) 785-9396  
Fax: (608) 785-9394  
Email: [plan@mrrpc.com](mailto:plan@mrrpc.com)  
Website: [mrrpc.com](http://mrrpc.com)

*Eugene Savage, Black River Falls  
Chairman*  
*Margaret Baecker, Independence  
Vice Chairman*  
*Vicki Burke, Onalaska  
Secretary & Treasurer*  
*Greg Flogstad, Onalaska  
Director*

### MINUTES

**MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC)  
BIMONTHLY MEETING  
10:00 a.m., April 10, 2013  
Seasons by the Lake, 910 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Onalaska, Wisconsin**

#### Call to Order

Chairman Savage called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. Greg Flogstad, Director took the roll and stated a quorum was present. The attendance roster is attached. Guests in attendance: Paul Wydeven, Wisconsin Department of Transportation-Southwest Region; Mike Temp, Tostrud & Temp S.C.

#### Minutes of February 13, 2013 Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Savage asked for a motion to approve the February 13, 2013 bimonthly minutes. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Leys to accept the minutes of the February 13, 2013, bimonthly meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### Treasurer's Report

Vicki Burke, MRRPC Secretary/Treasurer presented the treasurers reports. Ms. Burke said the January 31, 2013 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$280,085.31 and the February 28, 2013 ending balance was \$314,617.48. Ms. Burke reported that the beginning balance in February 28, 2013 was \$314,617.48 and the balance in all accounts as of March 31, 2013 was \$281,636.13.

Ms. Burke presented the financial report for the Business Capital Fund I indicating a January 31, 2013 balance of \$250,664.46. From February 2013 through March 2013 activity in this account included loan repayments of \$13,320.19, account interest of \$88.18, a loan drawdown of \$40,000 (M.M. San Juan LLC), and a transfer of \$18,913.99 to BCF Sequester Account leaving a March 31, 2013 ending balance of \$205,158.84. Ms. Burke reported a balance of \$212,825.88 in the BCF Sequester Account as of January 31, 2013. Account activity for February and March 2013 included a deposit of sequestered funds of \$18,913.99, a U.S. Treasury interest payment of \$74.96, and account interest of \$107.15 leaving a March 31, 2013 balance of \$231,772.06.

Ms. Burke said that as of January 31, 2013, the Business Capital Fund II RLF had a balance of \$110,809.22. Activity in this account for February 1, 2013 through March 31, 2013 included interest of \$27.00, loan repayments of \$2,168.72, and transfer of funds to the BCF 2 Sequester Account of \$51,119.57 leaving a March 31, 2013 balance of \$61,885.37. A balance of \$65,720.71 was reported for the BCF 2 Sequester Account. Account activity for February and March 2013 included a \$51,119.57 of sequestered funds, a U.S. Treasury interest payment of \$28.71 and account interest of \$38.30 leaving a March 31, 2013 balance of \$116,849.87.

The CMV Growth Development Fund began with a January 9, 2013 balance of \$55,413.76. Ms. Burke said from the period of January 10, 2013 through March 13, 2013 activity in this account included \$11.15 in interest, loan payments of \$259.25, a transfer of \$611.99 to the CMV Sequester Account, and a \$20,000 loan draw down for Evolutions Coatings, LLC leaving a March 13, 2013 balance of \$35,072.17. Ms. Burke said the balance in the CMV-EDA Sequester Fund as of January 13, 2013 was \$163,406.14. During the period of January 10, 2013 through March 13, 2013 activity in this account consisted of interest earned of \$42.40, an interest payment of \$51.70 to the U.S. Treasury, and a \$611.99 deposit of sequestered funds from CMV RLF Account No. 4100608462 leaving a March 13, 2013 balance of \$164,008.83.

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#### ***A Nine County Economic Development District Providing Assistance to Local Governments***

- Land Use Planning ▪ Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances ▪ Transportation Planning ▪ Economic Development Planning
- GIS Mapping ▪ Recreation Planning ▪ Revolving Loan Fund Administration ▪ Grant Writing ▪ Socioeconomic Data Dissemination
- Assist Local Interests in Responding to State and Federal Programs ▪ Advisory Service on Local Planning Issues
- Coordinating Agency for Programs and Activities ▪ Public Advocacy on Issues Affecting Our Region

Ms. Burke said the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund (LCEDF) began with a January 13, 2013 balance of \$50,219.39. From January 14, 2013 through March 13, 2013 account activity included \$2,280 in loan payments, \$14.34 in account interest, and a transfer of \$2,486.84 to the LCEDF Sequester Fund RLF leaving a March 13, 2013 account balance of \$50,026.89. The LCEDF Sequester Account began with a January 31, 2013 balance of \$56,725.67. From February 1, 2013 through March 31, 2013 activity in this account included account interest of \$19.07, an interest payment of \$29.65 to the U.S. Treasury, and a \$2,486.84 deposit of sequestered funds leaving a March 31, 2013 balance of \$59,201.93.

Chairman Savage asked for a motion of approval on the treasurers reports presented. Commissioner Kuhn made a motion to approve the treasurer's reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehrsam and approved unanimously.

Mr. Law reported that two loans have been closed since the last bimonthly meeting. He said things are beginning to look up and there is more activity in the last couple of months.

#### **Decision of 2012 MRRPC Audit – Presentation by Mike Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp S.C.**

Mike Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp S.C. indicated all Commissioners should have received a management letter with the 2012 MRRPC audit. He said there were no significant findings found when preparing the audit and there were no disagreements with management. He referred to the unqualified opinion on Page 4 of the audit that states "In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the component units, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission as of December 31, 2012, and the respective changes in financial position thereof for the year then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America". He said pages 6.1 through Pages 6.7 provide a management discussion and analysis of the audit in laymen's terms and Page 8 provides a statement of net assets as of 12/31/12, the business equivalent of a balance sheet. Mr. Temp reviewed the audit content. He said the MRRPC's net assets increased by \$29,924 in 2012 and net assets for the revolving loan funds decreased by \$35,027 due to a loan write off. Mr. Temp said internal controls for the MRRPC are good and the MRRPC qualifies as a low risk auditee. Chairman Savage asked for a motion on the MRRPC's 2012 audit. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the December 31, 2012 Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kuhn, and approved unanimously.

#### **Decision on Executive and Administration Committee's recommendations on 2013 Staff Salary Adjustments and 2014 County Contributions**

Commissioner Burke said the Executive and Administration Committee met on March 26, 2013 in Alma to discuss 2013 staff salary adjustments and 2014 county contributions. Ms. Burke said the Executive and Administration Committee was recommending MRRPC staff receive a 1.5% increase effective July 1, 2013 and that county contributions remain frozen at the 2013 level of \$132,770, meaning total contributions from all counties would total \$132,770. Mr. Flogstad stated some counties could pay less or more in 2014 as county contributions are based on changes in a county's real property equalized value. Commissioner Burke made a motion to adopt the recommendations of the Executive and Administration Committee (1.5% salary increase to all MRRPC staff effective July 1, 2013 and freezing 2014 county contributions at 2013 level). Commissioner Purdy seconded the motion. Chairman Savage asked if there was any further discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Report on the Executive and Administration Committee's approval of Kickapoo Valley Biofuel and Wood Product Feasibility Study Contract and Contract with WEDC**

Mr. Flogstad reported on the March 12, 2012, Executive and Administration Committee teleconference. He said the teleconference was held to act on the Kickapoo Valley Biofuel and Wood Product Feasibility Contract and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. He said it was important to act on the biofuel contract to keep the project moving along. Mr. Flogstad said the Executive and Administration Committee approved a contract for the Kickapoo Biofuel and Wood Product Feasibility Study with Short Elliott and Hendrickson.

Mr. Flogstad said a decision was also made by the Executive Committee to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with counties, communities, and Wisconsin Economic Development Administration (WEDC) to have the MRRPC serve as fiscal agent for reimbursement of 2012-2013 regional revolving loan fund administration costs. He reported the WEDC has a statewide goal to regionalize revolving loan funds. He said the MRRPC region has 12 RLFs. Mr. Flogstad said the WEDC has budgeted funds to reimburse counties and communities for participating in this process. Mr. Flogstad reported the Executive and Administration

Committee unanimously approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the MRRPC and WEDC. Chairman Savage asked for a motion to approve the actions taken by the Executive Committee; the motion was made and unanimously approved.

### **Review and Discussion on Regional Utilities, Community Facilities and Transportation Goals**

Mr. Fletcher said staff is preparing a Regional Comprehensive Plan consisting of nine chapters. Currently staff is in the process of developing “draft” regional goals for all elements of the plan. Mr. Fletcher said each chapter will include background information as well as goals and policies and actions on how to accomplish the goals. He said the goals will be broad based with general themes. He said through the whole process we are looking for feedback. Mr. Fletcher presented some “draft” utilities and community facility goals. The first goal was provide and maintain utilities/community facilities **by** enhancing and maintaining efficient and high-quality infrastructure, public facilities, service delivery, electronic communications, healthcare, education, public instruction, and emergency response capabilities to achieve residents’ quality-of-life expectations. Another goal focuses on energy conservation/efficiency by exploring opportunities for energy conservation, use of alternatives to fossil fuels, and the reduction of carbon emissions in the Region by seeking efficiencies in transportation and other energy uses. Mr. Fletcher said the Kickapoo Biofuel and Wood Product Feasibility Study discussed earlier is an example of an action that could help accomplish energy conservation and efficiency. Mr. Fletcher said another goal focuses on public health and environmental protection through the protection of public health and environmental resources by ensuring proper disposal of solid waste, proper treatment of sewage and storm water, safety of drinking water, and that public utilities are protected from natural disasters.

Mr. Fletcher continued by reviewing some draft transportation goals: 1) Encourage, support and maintain a multi-modal transportation network that creates safe, efficient, convenient, and economical transportation options for all businesses and residents (rural/urban, senior, disabled, low/moderate income individuals); 2) Promote transportation infrastructure facilities throughout the region that will accommodate future economic growth and enhance recreation and tourism opportunities; and 3) Continue to improve transportation coordination between transportation providers (public, private, non-profit) to enhance mobility and transportation services for residents in the region.

Paul Wydeven of the Wisconsin DOT mentioned new federal guidelines for MAP 21. He said the program is complementary and the region should take advantage of the good pieces of the program fine tuning it to Western Wisconsin. He mentioned a Southwest Wisconsin Park and Ride Study underway and said everyone was welcome to attend a meeting in Sparta on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The Park and Ride study’s purpose is to prepare a region-wide comprehensive plan for identifying Park and Ride lot facility needs in southwest Wisconsin to enhance mobility options for motorists and reduce single-occupancy vehicle use.

Mr. Fletcher said as we move forward in the regional planning process we need to establish draft goals and fill in the information to accomplish those goals. Commissioner Ross said that the first transportation goal outlined should probably state “select businesses and groups”. Mr. Fletcher said ultimately the goal is that transportation systems serve everyone ultimately. There was some discussion on biomass and Mr. Flogstad provided some information on energy efficiency in the region. He said that some data has shown that 51,000 households in the region could benefit and save money by converting to biomass. Commissioner Borreson said another issue is barge traffic and the delicate nature of this type of traffic. Mr. Fletcher said water transportation will be included in the plan. Commissioner Jaekel commented on the rail cars carrying oil up and down the Mississippi River via rail. She said a derailment would be a huge disaster. Mr. Fletcher said this could also be identified as an issue and concern in the plan. Commissioner Leys said these heavy rail cars carrying oil are a concern in the City of Prairie du Chien. Commissioner Krachey said the proposed pipeline could alleviate some of the concern but the pipeline is political. Mr. Law said some of these issues apply to Cultural, Natural and Agricultural Resources and many issues mingle across different elements of the plan.

### **Decision on Approval of Annual Update to the 2012-2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

Mr. Law said in 1977 the Mississippi River Region was designated as an economic development district and since that time because of that designation many projects in the region were eligible for federal funds. He gave some examples of projects funded: La Crosse Convention Center, Lakeview Business Park, and infrastructure improvements in La Farge, Wisconsin. Mr. Law said that by preparing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report, the nine county Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission continues to maintain its Economic Development District designation from the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, a designation that qualifies the region’s counties, communities, institutions and businesses eligibility for federal funds.

Mr. Law continued by reviewing the 2012-2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) annual update. He said the general trend in the region is toward modest population growth. The state and Region have grown since 2000, but at a slower rate than the nation. He said the greatest growth in the region since 2000 was in Pierce County and the greatest decline was in Crawford County. He said all counties in the region, with the exception of Pepin County, have grown since 2010. Mr. Law said the rate of housing growth in the region has slowed since the early 2000s with the state and the nation following the same general pattern. He mentioned the housing crisis and recession that began in December of 2007 had a major impact on the growth of new housing.

Mr. Law said per capita income in the region, state and nation have been growing, however since 2009, per capita income rate of growth in the region has outpaced the state and nation. Mr. Law said the 2007 recession had a major impact on employment everywhere. He said there were 1,474 fewer unemployed people in the Region in 2011 than in 2010 however there were also 1,135 fewer people in the workforce in 2011 than in 2010. He added the state and the nation also saw increases in the number of employed people in 2011 for the first time since 2007. Mr. Law said nevertheless, the number of people employed in 2011 was still well below pre-recession levels. Mr. Law said manufacturing employment is a bright spot in the region and from 2009 to 2011, manufacturing employment in the Region grew by 5.0%, and while it grew by 1.7% in the state it showed a net loss of 1.2% in the nation. He said manufacturing is one of the key economic drivers of the Region, and it's been something of a success story in the last decade. Mr. Law listed some of the top employment sectors. Mr. Law said there are 5 employment sectors in the Region that overlap with the highest-paying sectors. Those sectors are: Government and Government Enterprises; Manufacturing; Health Care & Social Assistance; Finance & Insurance; and Transportation & warehousing.

Mr. Law said that from 2007 to 2012, Jackson Co. had the highest percentage increase in equalized value (10.7%), and Pierce Co. suffered the greatest loss in equalized value (14.8%). He said the problems in the housing market are still apparent, despite other economic indicators that show improvement. Mr. Law said a positive economic indicator is the rate of sales tax growth has increased since 2009 for the Region by 10.9% and the state 11.0%. Mr. Law concluded by reviewing regional economic trends. Chairman Savage asked if there were any questions on the CEDS report and asked for a motion to approve the 2012-2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Commissioner Ross made a motion to approve the 2012-2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leys and approved unanimously.

### **Decision on Resolution 13-1**

Director Flogstad presented Resolution 13-1, a Resolution wherein the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission expresses its appreciation and recognition of James Scholmeier for decades of exceptional public service to his community, county, region, and state. Mr. Flogstad read the resolution in its entirety. Chairman Savage asked for a motion on the resolution. Commissioner Vold made a motion to approved Resolution 13-1, Commissioner Jaekel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

### **Old Business and New Business**

Chairman Savage asked if there was any old business. He then asked if there was any new business. Some discussion occurred on the SMRT commuter bus and ridership numbers. Commission Christenson commented on the condition of county roads. Commissioner Leys said city roads are also deteriorating. There was an overall consensus that transportation funds are shrinking. Chairman Savaged asked if there was any more discussion on any new or old issues and hearing none a motion was made to adjourn.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the April 10, 2013, bimonthly meeting minutes approved on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April 2013.

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Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer